



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield Field Office
3801 Pegasus Drive
Bakersfield, California 93308



March 6, 2014
8300P
CA-16.30

Dear Keyesville Public Land User:

The Bakersfield Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recently held a public workshop to discuss the management of public lands in the area near Keyesville, California. The workshop was attended by 44 members of the public. Participants included members of Backcountry Horsemen, Stewards of the Sequoia, Bakersfield Trailblazers, Keepers of the Kern, the grazing permittee, one rafting permittee, volunteers, several property owners, and general recreational users.

The focus of the workshop was to provide an overview of current planning direction, and to solicit public feedback on management opportunities and challenges. The following pages show the results of the discussion. This information, along with a copy of the presentation provided at the workshop, will shortly be posted on BLM Bakersfield's webpage at:

www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/bakersfield/Programs/Recreation_opportunities/Keyesville_SRMA.html

The greatest interest was shown in trail systems and organized events for equestrian, motorized vehicles, and mountain bikes. The greatest challenges identified by those in attendance related to communication, compliance, and enforcement of rules, along with management of trail systems and fire danger.

Not everyone who is interested in Keyesville was able to attend the workshop. Several of those unable to attend have sent in comments and suggestions, and at least one person who did attend the meeting followed up with additional suggestions. All public comments and suggestions received by BLM will be considered as we develop a plan for Keyesville.

Although a decision on the Proposed Bakersfield Resource Management Plan will not be issued for several more months, BLM will continue to manage Keyesville under current guidance. This past year we have gathered more information on cultural resources and trails in order to help with future decisions. Soon we will be making some limited improvements to signing and general communication. Upcoming events in the next few weeks include the Keyesville Classic on March 29 & 30, and the Southern California High School Cycling League "Cruise the Keys" event on April 5 & 6. We are now in the early stages of planning for a Public Lands Day event in September. And we continue to try to keep up with litter – with greater success since the Keepers of the Kern have begun volunteering their time!

The next workshop for Keyesville will be held on Wednesday April 9, 2014 at the Kern River Valley Veterans/Senior Center at 6405 Lake Isabella Blvd, Lake Isabella CA. The session will begin at 7:00 PM and run until 9:00. We will briefly discuss the results of the first workshop, discuss specific planning direction, review the process we are now embarking upon, and provide an opportunity for the public to ask questions and voice concerns.

If you are not interested in receiving notices or results of our Keyesville workshops, please contact Steve Larson by mail at this address, by phone at (661) 391-6099, or by email at slarson@blm.gov. Questions or comments may be submitted using that same contact information. Thank you for your interest in Keyesville!

Sincerely,

/s/ Gabriel Garcia

Gabriel Garcia
Bakersfield Field Manager

Keyesville Opportunities

With the river and a network of roads and trails in an attractive physical setting, combined with a rich historic past and centuries of use by the Native American community, Keyesville presents a wide variety of opportunities.

At the February 26th Keyesville Workshop, a list of known recreation uses was provided. Attendees added to that list, and then identified which of those opportunities were most important to them. Following are the results, with the numbers indicating the number of times (if any) that value was selected:

- 21 Equestrian Use (Trails)
- 17 Motorized Trail Use (9 motorcycles, 3 side-by-sides, 2 quads, 2 4x4, 1 general)
- 15 Mountain biking (Trails)
- 15 Competitive or Commercial Events (9 Equestrian, 3 Mtn Bike, 2 Motorcycle Trials, 1 General)
- 7 Preserving Historic Resources
- 6 Designated and Maintained Trails
- 4 The Diversity of Uses
- 4 Individual Camping
- 2 Walking/Hiking (Trails)
- 2 Trail System Connectivity with USFS (at Black Gulch and elsewhere)
- 2 Fishing
- 2 Non-commercial kayaking/rafting
- 1 Group camping
- 1 Organized Group Events (e.g. Boy Scout jamborees)
- 1 Water play
- 1 Geocaching
- 1 Historical Interpretive walks
- 1 Tourism
- 1 Amenities such as BMX, Skate Park, Ropes Course, Fitness Loop
- Recreational Mining
- Bouldering/Rock climbing
- Commercial river rafting
- Hunting
- Target shooting
- Birding
- Commercial Rock climbing classes

This list is not all inclusive, and we know that not all interested members of the public were present. For example, although recreational mining was not identified by anyone as one of their important uses, we know that for many people it is important. Had visitors been present who use the area during summer three-day weekends, there might have been increased interest in group camping or water play.

What this does tell us is that the trail system is very important for a variety of uses. Those present at the meeting also valued opportunities for competitive/commercial events and historic resource preservation.

Keyesville Challenges

Challenges are presented by users, resources, and potential conflicts between users. Larger numbers of values combined with greater diversity and intensity of uses makes management more complex. The following breakdown of challenges was created in part by BLM and added to by meeting attendees, shows those challenges that attendees felt were of greatest concern to them:

70 Compliance & Enforcement

- (19) Enforcement of Regulations/Rules
- (17) Recreation Encroachment on Private Lands
- (8) Education of Visitors
- (7) Lack of Respect for Rules
- (5) Vandalism (destruction, graffiti, theft)
- (5) Trash & Debris
- (3) Vandalism to petroglyphs
- (3) Loss of minerals in mining claims to non-claimants.
- (2) Interpretation/law enforcement
- (1) Theft of and vandalism to historic properties.

41 General Travel Management Issues:

- (15) Signing routes, rehabilitating disturbances, & designing a trail system to address user needs.
- (10) Trail Use: hikers vs equestrian vs mtn bike vs motorcycle vs quad vs UTV vs 4x4
- (10) Access to Historic Sites
- (4) Confusing Trail System
- (2) Limited egress for residents and visitors – need to create a Fire Safe Zone

27 Increased Fire Danger & Need for Fire Management

14 Natural Deterioration of Historic Sites (Walker Cabin, Keys Mine Stamp Mill)

11 Signing – (5) How to convey needed messages and manage routes without too many signs.

- (4) Risk of Too Many Signs
- (2) Increased & Improved Signage
- Need for Signs That Get the Attention of Visitors

5 Shooting/Hunting vs Other Recreation Uses

5 Pearl Harbor Drive: name change & maintenance

4 Impacts to American Indian values

4 Decreases in the Numbers of Trees

4 Balance between Recreation and Preservation

3 Impacts to residences and businesses from dispersed recreation and permitted activities.

3 Loss of wildlife habitat

3 Restoration after Fire

2 Water Quality

2 Getting Maps and Rules Online

2 General Safety

1 Firewood collection – both using logs on site and cutting and removing wood.

1 Visitors camping more than two weeks; campsite tidiness.

1 Kinds of Users & Access

Large groups of recreational users vs small groups

Recreation impacts to grazing (disturbing cattle, vandalizing improvements, leaving gates open).

Recreation impacts *from* cattle (scaring visitors, impacting trails, defecating).

Inadvertent impacts to cultural resources from recreation use
Soil compaction
Loss of organic matter due to firewood collection
Loss of wildlife trees
Destruction of cyptogamic soil crusts
Siltation of Kern River
Impacts to river riparian community
Hazards posed by abandoned mines.
Dogs running loose
High school parties
Cables/ropes strung across the river.
Off Trail Use

This feedback suggests that having rules that are simple to understand, clearly communicated, effective, and enforced is in general the greatest concern. General travel management issues are a significant second group of concerns, while fire management, the condition of historic resources, and signing are all also important to a many of those in attendance at the meeting.